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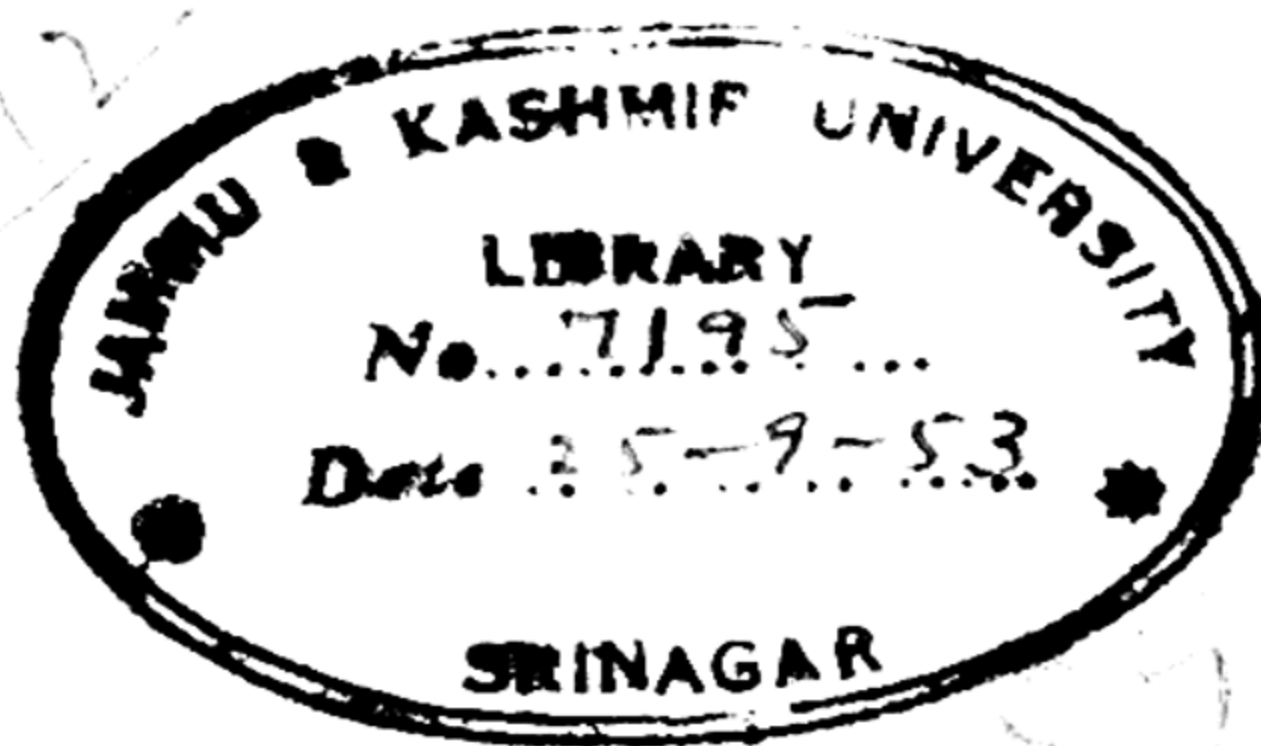
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GOD'S CALL TO YOUTH TO-DAY

BY

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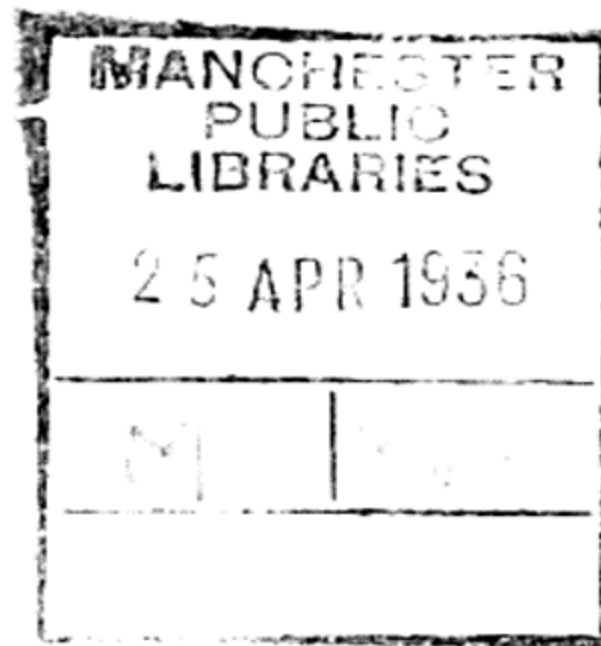


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PREFACE

THE chapters of this book were delivered as lectures in St. Edward's Church, Cambridge, during the "Mission in Cambridge University" in January 1936. I had no desire to offer to my hearers, and I have no desire to offer to the reader, a ready-made religious belief which he may put on as a man might put on a ready-made suit of clothes. A man must think out things for himself; not without help, of course, from the Church, but none the less for himself. A second-hand religion has little power in a man's own life, and no power in that of others whom he may desire to help. In these lectures I said some of the things that I myself have learned from the Church, the experience of life, and (I say it with all humility, but I dare not forbear saying it) from God. To my readers, and especially to young people, I would say "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

There is, of course, much that I should have liked to say for which I found no time. This is no full profession of faith. Yet I trust it may prove helpful to some and especially to young men and women at our universities.

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THE FOUNDATIONS OF BELIEF

Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal: "The Lord knoweth them that are His." 2 Tim. ii, 9.

I WANT to begin, to-day, by saying two things. I and my brother missionary are in the same service; we come to you with the same object, and we bring you the same message. We come to invite you to an entire and whole-hearted surrender to God, "Whose service is perfect freedom." We ask you to accept Jesus Christ as Lord of Life and as Saviour from sin. We ask you to seek the guidance and control of God the Holy Ghost in every moment of your lives because we have no kind of doubt of the truth of Christ's words "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."¹ I repeat: our service, our aim and our message are the same for both of us.

But we approach you from different sides. He

Acts i, 8.

will appeal to you from the side of the *Affections*, beseeching you to love God, revealed in Christ; and of your *Will*, urging you to make the great decision and to choose Christ. I shall make my appeal to your *Intellect*, inviting you to find in the doctrines of the Church the best philosophy of life, the answer to all the world's problems. This description of our aims is, of course, only partly true. No *psychosis*, no act of mind that is to say, is without its elements of all three things, Intellect, Will and Affections. And it is a very foolish misunderstanding of religion to suppose that that surrender to Christ, that entire conversion to which my brother missionary will summon you, is in any way irrational. On the contrary; it is in the highest degree rational and reasonable. But for all that it remains broadly true that Mr. Bryan Green's ground will be the sphere of the Affections and Will; mine will be that of the Intellect.

The second thing I want to say is that Mr. Bryan Green's sphere is the more important one for two reasons; firstly because in religion, as in every other department of life, there must be *the will to believe*, if we are to come to any decision; and secondly because it is the affections that move

the will. Shall we look at these two things for a moment.

There must be the Will to Believe! In my Cambridge days psychology was a very young science. William James had not yet introduced the expression—I think it was his originally—‘the will to believe.’ And therefore many men, noble and high-minded men whom I knew personally, held back from religion, in mistaken loyalty to truth, just because they so desired the help and comfort of religion. Instead of recognising this hunger of the soul for God as an argument they feared to believe lest they should be moved by desire and not constrained by reason. But I say again there must be the will to believe. Here is a good illustration of my point. Many years ago a famous missionary sent a young Manchester man to me to be prepared for baptism and confirmation. The man puzzled me from the first. But half way through the second class I said to him “With whom are you having a joke; with me or with Fr. Blank? You don’t want to be baptised and you know you don’t.” He frankly admitted that he did not. He said “I heard Fr. Blank preach and I wondered how such a clever man could believe the Bible. So I asked

him a few questions and he thought I was converted and sent me to you." I said "Then my dear fellow, come and see me as often as you like. We will talk of books and music, or play chess. But we won't talk about religion because you care nothing about it." Since then he has, I believe, come to a true religion. But then he could not learn for he was not interested.

But how, you may ask, are you to get this will to believe? There we touch our second point. The affections must move the will. St. Paul says "The love of Christ constraineth us."² Let your prayer all through this mission be—it will be the constant prayer of both missionaries—that you may "see Jesus."³ And the way to see Him is to desire to do His will. "The pure in heart . . . shall see God."⁴ And the well known text, "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God"⁵ should, of course, be as Dr. Moffatt translates it "Anyone who chooses to do His will shall understand whether my teaching comes from God." And then we have the promise, in the Book of the Revelation "His servants shall serve Him and

² 2 Cor. v, 14.

⁴ Matt. v, 8.

³ John xii, 21.

⁵ John vii, 17.

they shall see His face.”⁶ So then try to do His will, and pray to see Him and your prayer will not go unanswered. And when you see Him you will be drawn to Him, and will give yourself to Him in entire and joyful surrender.

What I have to say to you will, then, be of no avail except to two classes of hearers. They are firstly those who have found their true manhood in entire surrender to Christ, and secondly those who desire to make that surrender but are held back by “the oppositions of science falsely so called.”⁷ Let me say a word or two on these two classes also.

Many people speak as if surrender to Christ, and the giving up of those things which are incompatible with His service, were an impoverishment of life. The exact opposite is true. Before the War I knew a young Oxford man. He had done brilliantly in two schools; he had had great athletic success; he was one of the most popular men of his year; when I met him he had already made his mark in journalism. It was my privilege to baptise him and to present him for Confirmation. And some years after his first communion—and he remained a regular and

⁶ Rev. xxii, 3 and 4.

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⁷ 1 Tim. vi, 20.

devout communicant till he was killed as a flying officer in Palestine—he said to me “I never knew what it was to be a man till I found Christ.” So true it is that whosoever will lose his life for Christ’s sake shall find it.⁸

Again many people speak as if it were impossible for a Christian to reconcile his beliefs with the teachings of modern science. How people can hold such an opinion I cannot understand. They cannot surely think that all Christians are either ignorant of modern science or are conscious hypocrites. Well! I have spoken of oppositions of science *falsely so called*, and we shall have to meet and to answer many such. But this I will say here and now; I am sure there is no word in modern science which need hinder anyone from whole-hearted acceptance of Christianity.

But my introductory remarks have been long enough. Let me get to my subject. I might almost present it to you in the three words of Kaut’s great trio. God; Freedom; Immortality. That is to say I want to give to you my reasons for believing

(i) that Theism is the only sure foundation

⁸ Matt. xvi, 25.

for a rational and workable philosophy of life,

- (ii) that man is a free spiritual being; one, that is to say, who builds his own character so that he is truly self-creating; though not of course without God's assistance; and
- (iii) that immortality, the survival of the individual, is a necessary pre-requisite of all our thinking.

Here is matter enough indeed for an afternoon's talk. *Theism*. By theism I mean, of course, belief in a *personal* God. Not a God who is a Person, so that you and I and Mr. Smith are three individuals, and God makes a fourth, greater no doubt, but still one of the four, and external to the other three as each of the three is external to, and distinct from, the other two. No indeed! "In Him we live, and move, and have our being."⁹ When I speak of a personal God I mean One who knows and loves and wills; One who knows me as I am; One who loves me in spite of what I am; One who wills that I should one day be with Him, new-made in His likeness; One whom I can know and love and choose as my

⁹ Acts xvii, 28.

supreme good. And I claim that theism, this belief in a personal God, is the only satisfactory philosophy of life.

It would be easy to show you, if I had time, the utter confusion, the chaos, in the world of thought to-day. It is not that no two of our modern prophets agree together. If that were all you could say to me "Well! they all differ from one another, and from Christianity. But Christianity is in no better case. It offers one more explanation of life and of the universe, but it, too, differs from all the rest. It is in no better case than all the others." And that would be quite true if all that we could say was that all our prophets, and all their prophesyings, contradict one another. But that is far from all that we can say. They do not merely offer different interpretations of the world. *They deny that any interpretation is possible.* Their judgment on life is that it is

a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

Dr. Matthews' writing of the "intellectual and moral confusion" of our day uses such expressions as "the distrust of systems," "the revolt against

reason," "the irrationalist strain in modern thought," etc., etc. But the confusion of modern thought can best be displayed in the sphere of morals. Lippmann in America, wisely recognising that civilized life is impossible without a code of morals, and holding, not so wisely, that Christianity is no longer credible, gives us in his book *A Preface to Morals* his search for some foundation for right and wrong and—finds none. Mr. Bernard Shaw boldly declares that the only golden rule is that there is no golden rule. Mr. Aldous Huxley offers us his guidance, in the difficult task of living, in a book called *Do what you will*, and Mr. John Cowper Powys offers his guidance in a book called *In Defence of Sensuality*. Mr. Bertrand Russell, our most distinguished exponent of modern agnosticism, deals a death-blow at all philosophy by denying that it is possible to attain to any coherent view of philosophy. To the question, the supreme question for each one of us, "Where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?" our new guides to-day can only answer "It is not in me."¹⁰

Yet man cannot rest in agnosticism. We still

¹⁰ Job. xxviii, 12 and 14.

feel the urge to seek some answer to those obstinate questionings—What is this world? How did it come into being? What is the purpose of life? Whence came we and whither are we going?

Do not be afraid of the word philosophy. When I was an undergraduate many of my more devout friends accused me of trusting too much in thought, in reasoning. They said I ought to seek a simple faith. Yes! indeed. But a simple faith need not be the faith of a simpleton. God is perfect Wisdom no less than perfect Holiness, perfect Love and perfect Beauty, and a religion that is to be of any use to me must have something to say to my head. Let me speak plainly to you. The reason why so many young men at our universities find it hard to know what to believe, the reason why they feel themselves “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine”¹¹ is because they have not yet been brought into close touch with real life and its problems. You have thought too much and acted too little. But ‘thinking is windy diet,’ and in an university a man can easily get mental indigestion. Your faith, the fruits of your think-

¹¹ Ephes. iv, 14.

ing, must be checked and confirmed by action, and if that action is among pain, and poverty and sin, and the joys and sorrows of plain men and women, so much the better. But if too much thought, divorced from action, is barren, action divorced from thought is fatal. No matter by what name he calls it rational man must have a philosophy of life.

And I do not say that that Theism is the best philosophy of life. I unhesitatingly claim that it is the only rational one. You ask of a thing 'A' what caused it, and are told that 'B' caused it. And what caused 'B'? Why 'C' of course. And 'D' caused 'C'; and 'E' 'D' and so on in an unending chain of causation. But there is a possible end. We meet it every day. When we can say "This happened because someone *chose* to do it" there is neither any need nor any possibility of further enquiry. Foolish people may ask "But what made him choose so and not otherwise?" but there is no answer. If he was a free spirit his free unfettered choice was a *vera causa*. And so with the universe and God. You may, if you like, say "There is no explanation possible of this universe" and so sink into an agnosticism which paralyses alike the intellect, the will and the

affections. Or you may say "This universe is because God wills it" and so find the first beginnings of a faith that braces and heartens the whole man. But there is no alternative. It is either a personal God or—nothing. All talk about a 'Life Force' is mere unscientific nonsense, mere coining words to conceal ignorance, mere saying Abracadabra that a noise may conceal the absence of thought. How can a *force* produce a mind that thinks? And if it can and does, then it is not a force at all, but something which itself can think and plan; something—no, let me say it, somebody—that is personal.

Man a free spiritual being. And as I say that belief in a personal God "God the Father Almighty, *Maker of Heaven and Earth*," supplies the only rational foundation for a philosophy, so I say that belief in man as a free spiritual being supplies the only rational answer to the question "What is the purpose of life?" If this life is a school where I can be trained and prepared for the wider life of the world to come, if in Keats' lovely phrase this world is a "vale of soul-making" then life has meaning and significance. Put the purpose of man's being anywhere outside himself, in things or in the State, or in what you

will, and what can you say of man's life? You can only say, with the weary and disillusioned "Preacher . . . King in Jerusalem," "As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?"¹² Put the purpose of man's life in himself, in the formation of noble character, and you have a purpose, and a worthy purpose for life. I say, a worthy purpose! For there is nothing more beautiful, nothing more attractive, nothing of greater value than goodness. Here is a story to illustrate what I mean. During the War a young officer was in a trench with half a dozen men or his company. One of them threw a bomb, but it hit the top of the trench and fell back among them. There was no time to throw it again, and when it exploded it would have killed or maimed all the men. So the officer threw himself onto it so that it exploded in his body and he only was killed. When I remember that story I do not ask if it were wise or not. I do not enquire

¹² Eccles. v, 15 and 16.

whether at that time there was a great shortage of officers so that one officer would be worth more than six privates. I say

“Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast, no weakness, no
contempt,
Dispraise or blame—nothing but well and
fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.”

But perhaps, like many people to-day, you hate war so that you find it hard to see virtue in a soldier. Then let me speak to you of the young Lancashire miner whom I saw die in the hospital of which I am chaplain. A young married man of eight and twenty, with a wife and two children whom he loved. And he held up a fall of rock with his back while his mates crept to safety through a narrow hole the rock would have blocked. When it fell it broke his back and in hospital he was dying slowly. When I praised his deed he said “Oh, Sir! We chaps don’t think of ourselves like that. Any decent fellow would do as much for his mates.” Would they? I don’t know. But one thing I know. “Greater love hath

no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”¹³

Perhaps you will say to me that the purpose of life cannot lie in these rare moments of great sacrifice. Besides they do not come to us all. Then let me tell one more story, and it shall be commonplace enough. One of my Salford mothers took her family for a day trip to Blackpool. It meant an extra hard day's work the day before. It meant getting up at I don't know what hour to get things ready. And then from six in the morning till late at night it meant carrying a heavy child with two more dragging at her skirts, and two older ones to look after. I said to her "I should think you were dead tired before you started." She replied "Well there, Rector, I was. But as long as childer enjoyed themselves I don't seem to mind." As long as the children enjoy themselves I don't mind! There you have in a sentence the lives of tens of thousands of our working-class mothers. Amid unending work, and poverty and sickness, as long as their children are fed and clothed and happy they don't mind. One advantage of working among the very poor is that one sees human nature, so to speak, un-

¹³ John xv, 13.

clothed and if one sees much that is vile one sees almost unbelievable goodness and heroism and beauty. And when I see noble character I say "It is for this that God made the world; this is life's purpose and aim; this is God's purpose and His desire." And I find it an adequate purpose and a worthy aim. A great Jesuit once defined the aim of his society as being "To cultivate an infinite number of souls." We might transfer those words to God. His highest purpose is to cultivate an infinite number of souls.

Immortality. And do you see how this value and beauty of noble character is in itself the best guarantee of personal immortality? God will not create saints and then break them and throw them on the scrap-heap. Many leading men of science to-day declare that personal immortality, the survival after death of you and of me and of every human being who ever knew conscious life and thought, is unthinkable. But I believe that what they are really misled by is a certain weakness of imagination. If they would think out their objection, and put it into words, they would say "Is it possible that God can desire all these millions and millions of souls through all eternity?" Let us face the question. Can God desire

the continued existence of all men? I am sure you feel that He might desire your continued existence. And if you are polite enough you might add "And doubtless He might desire to keep such a man as Canon Green. But all these hundreds of millions of Chinamen, all as alike as so many peas. All these poor Africans 'with untutored minds.' So uninteresting! Can He really desire them?" That is the problem of personal immortality. We can understand a stamp-collector making a choice collection of rarities. But to go on filling endless volumes with used penny reds!

But there is where we make our mistake. No life is uninteresting or without value to the person who lives it. No life lacks its thrills when seen, so to speak, from within. Do you yourself find no pleasure in even so simple a thing as drinking a glass of cool water when you are hot and thirsty? Is your pleasure in it any less because millions on millions have enjoyed the same pleasure before you. Pick one where you will from among all those Chinamen. Is the adventure of life less precious to him because there are 400 millions like him? I say again no life lacks value when seen from within. *And God sees us from*

within; for if we live and move and have our being in Him, He also lives in us and knows us as part of His experience. And let us go back for a moment to the analogy of the stamp-collector. In God's collection there are no duplicates. Each soul is unique and of infinite value. Once, years ago, when I was a curate in Leeds, I was disputing with a secularist in the Town Hall Square. He said "To hear you speak one would suppose you did not believe that all men were equal." "All men equal!" I exclaimed. "God forbid that I should believe such nonsense. No two men are equal. God never made a man like me, no, nor like you either, since time began, and He will never make another like either of us again." That is one of the wonders of personality. Each person is unique.

So I offer you to-night the most invigorating, the most bracing of faiths; faith in a personal God, Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth; faith in men and women as free self-creating beings capable of virtue; and faith in personal immortality, the immortality of souls, each one of which is of infinite value.

But is it really possible to retain this faith in view of what modern science teaches us of the

universe. Go out on a clear frosty night and if your sight is good you may see 3,000 stars. And at a moderate estimate—some put it higher—there are, for each one you can see, ten million you can't see. And that is our little patch of stars, our galaxy. And our best telescopes show us two million other galaxies. And, if the universe is the size astronomers believe it to be, each galaxy we see may be taken to stand for another two million we can't see. And our sun is quite an insignificant one, a dwarf of the G class. Antares would hold 64 million of our suns and still not be crowded. And this earth of ours is one of the minor planets. And during all the millions of millions of years the universe has existed, something like man may have existed for a million years, and anything to be called civilized man for fifteen thousand years at most. Can one seriously believe that man is really an object of God's care and love, and His purpose for the universe?

Well! to tell you the truth I am not much impressed by all this talk about time and space. I don't take it very seriously. Oh! I am not saying that it is not true. I dare say it is as true as that Brighton is forty miles from London. But I am

not at all sure that Time and Space are anything more than the frame-work in which I arrange my sensations. When men of science tell me how big the universe is I merely reply, with well founded pride, "What a wonderful being man must be to need so much space and so much time in which to arrange his sensations." And if I am wrong in this still I am right when I say that science has nothing, in all the universe, to show us as wonderful, as interesting or as important as a little child. Antares, this star 400 million miles in diameter, what is it? Hot gas! Nothing more. This supposed problem of the world's size and man's insignificance is no new one. I had to face it nearly half a century ago. When I was an undergraduate I had been reading astronomy with Professor Flux, and I spent most of the next summer vacation working at the St. John's College Mission in Walworth. On a Sunday School excursion a little boy of seven sprained his ankle and in the train back, anxious that he should not get hurt, I took him on my knee. Please do not think that I sentimentalize about the boy. He was not a pretty child. I had no reason to believe that he was likely to grow up specially good or specially clever. He was ragged and dirty and

needed a wash. Yet as he slept there on my knee I knew, with an absolute certainty that no arguments could shake, that he was of more value than all the stars in all the galaxies and that a God who thought otherwise would be unworthy of the name of God. For a Being who could prefer many cubic miles of hot gas to a child, who could know good and evil, and choose the good, and love righteousness, would be a God of whom I should not wish to hear. Do not, I beg, allow yourself to be bludgeoned out of your rights as a man by talk about Time and Space. Man is a spiritual being and, as Dr. Temple is never tired of reminding us, values are the true guides, the values of Truth, Beauty and Goodness.

So I offer you to-day, as a sure foundation for thought, Kaut's great trio, God, Freedom and Immortality. To-morrow I hope I may get nearer to personal religion.

GOD AND MAN

Christ, Who is our Life. Col. iii, 4

I DO not know of any word which has been the subject of more definitions than the word Religion. But among them all there are only two that satisfy me, and as they are quite different they satisfy me, naturally, from different points of view. The first defines Religion as a man's attitude towards the whole of Reality. That definition would suit my first address. But the second definition of Religion declares it to be *a disinterested delight in God for His own sake*. And that definition will, I hope, suit what I want to say to-day. I hope you see how suitable it is. The man of Science loves and seeks Knowledge not because of any material rewards it will bring but for its own sake. The Artist loves and seeks Beauty, not that he may make money by his art but for Beauty's own sake, and will starve in a garret rather than lower his ideals. The Moralist

loves and seeks Goodness for its own sake, not because he believes that "Honesty is the best policy"; and he is prepared to say *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*. And so it is right that the religious man should love God for His own sake, since He is the perfection of Wisdom, Beauty, and Goodness, and love Him disinterestedly "not for the sake of gaining aught, or seeking a reward."

What reason then have we for saying that God is Good, that God is Love? I cannot see that there can be any reason for such a belief except that those who have known Him have found Him to be Love. If God cannot be known, then all talk about Him seems to me to be waste of time. If He can be known, if, that is to say, religious experience can be trusted, then there is no doubt. The experience of the race is at one on the point. God is our supreme Good. God is Love.

Now as I shall rest much of my argument on religious experience I must diverge for a few moments to notice the criticisms of certain schools of psychology. One thing certainly needs saying. Great as has been the progress made in psychology in the last thirty years, it is

not yet an exact science and shows no signs of becoming one in the near future. I do not know which astonishes me most, the extreme dogmatism of many leading psychologists or the almost complete lack of agreement among them on the very points upon which they are most dogmatic. Let me tell you why I stress these points. It is no unintelligent opposition to new truth. It is no bigoted refusal to face facts which seem to tell against my religion. No indeed. It is due to my own experience during half a century. The mechanical view of the universe in vogue when I was an undergraduate, which in T. H. Huxley's words sought "the gradual banishment from all regions of human thought of what we call spirit and spontaneity," was far more inclusive, more imposing, supported by greater triumphs of applied science, than anything the psychologists can show. And in answer to its challenge many men surrendered their faith. I did not. I claim no special intelligence. But I did recognise, even while I was still at school, that the system left no room for distinctions of right and wrong. And so I recognised that the *facts of science* are one thing and the *systems of philosophy* erected on those facts by men of science, with

perhaps no great training in philosophic method, are another. At any rate the whole mechanical view of the universe, which looked so imposing when I was at college, and for the sake of which men gave up belief in God, and Prayer and Moral Freedom, is to-day deader than the dodo, and Dr. Temple can class Professor Huxley's contribution to psychology, his doctrine of epiphenomenalism, with other "outrages on commonsense." To-day we are face to face with a somewhat similar situation. Some schools of psychology—not all, by any means, but some—summon us to surrender belief in God and reliance on religious experience, not in loyalty to proved *facts* of science, but in deference to systems rejected by as many competent authorities as they are accepted by. Two things therefore I would ask you to do when your religion is attacked on so-called scientific grounds. Firstly, scrutinise the alleged facts and ask yourself whether they are borne out by your daily experience among normal people. I am, for instance, never much impressed by theories based on the assertion that all boys naturally hate their fathers, because I know that statement to be false. And secondly reject all irrationalist systems. When I am assured that

my religious beliefs are no doubt held quite honestly but that they are merely the fruit of an effort to justify irrational desires which have their seat in the subconscious mind I want to ask my critic whether all his beliefs are equally devoid of foundation. Reject, I beg you, all irrationalist systems. If their advocates are wrong you obviously need pay no attention to them. And if they are right they have already robbed what they say of all significance.

So I shall venture to treat the religious experience of the race, duly tested and criticised, as worthy of our attention.

And what does that experience say? It says (i) that God knows us each intimately and can be known; (ii) that God loves us, and (iii) that we can trust ourselves to His loving providence. Read carefully Exodus xxxiii, 12—23, and see how the salient points of the story are that God says

“I know thee by name

Thou hast found grace in my sight

I will do that which thou hast spoken to me of.”

I say that that experience is universal. Here are some examples.

During the War one of my lads, at a crisis of terror and danger, had an experience identical with the one described. That is to say he suddenly realized that God was caring for him, that God loved him and that if he were blown to pieces that moment it would not matter as God would take him to Himself. But when I quoted it in a debate at Manchester University Mr. C. M. Joad made great fun of it as an expression of my belief that God had enlisted on the side of the Allies and was against Germany. Of course it implied nothing of the kind. God did not even promise the boy that he should come out alive, still less that the enemy who threatened him should be killed. What the lad realized—so that, to quote his own words, he might grow up bad and neglect God, but he could never say there was no God, because he had heard Him speak—was God's knowledge of him, God's love for him, and God's providence. But as the story is liable to be misunderstood I will take another example. Some years ago I was staying with an old college friend and he asked me to talk to his girl of seventeen, my god-daughter, as she was unsettled in her

religion. Let me call her Lucy. I took her for a walk, and told her that I did not ask her to go to church if, as she said, it only bored her, but I did beg her to keep up the habit of prayer. Some six months after she wrote to me and said "Yesterday, as I was praying, I suddenly knew the truth of what you said to me. I knew that God was listening to me, and that He loved me and was pleased that Lucy should be speaking to Him, and I knew that I could always trust Him and rely on Him." What struck me most in her letter was the phrase "He was pleased that Lucy should be speaking to Him." I am sure she had not read that chapter in Exodus. It was not a Bible-reading house. Yet when she knew God she felt that "He knew her by name, and she had also found grace in His sight and He would do that which she had spoken to Him of."

And I believe that there is no form of religious experience recorded in the Bible which is not repeated to-day. I wish I had time to give you examples of this fact which I myself have met with at first hand. Nor is Christian experience of God the only thing we need take account of. Religious experience knows no boundaries of

denomination or of sect. If you read Mohammedan, Buddhist or Hindoo mystics it is strange how their innermost experience is all of one piece. But no! Why should I say that it is strange? They came to know God, and there is only one God to know, even He who, revealed to us in Jesus Christ, is "the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever."¹ And anyone who has first-hand experience of God knows Him as Love. That is an universal experience. And I can see no reason why the religious experience of the race should be doubted and ignored any more than any other portion of human experience. Read Professor Bergson, the great fore-runner of modern movements in philosophy, the first man, perhaps, to deal really effective blows at the mechanicalism of the Nineteenth Century and see how direct religious experience takes a greater and greater place in his thought till it comes to its own in his last work *The two sources of Morality and Religion*. The mechanicalism of the Nineteenth Century is dead, and the bewildered irrationalism of to-day is but a post-war symptom. The world is ready, in the realm of thought no less than in the realm

¹ Heb. xiii, 8.

of conduct, for a great revival of religion. And I think that "there is a sound of abundance of rain."²

But you may say to me—and you will be more than justified in saying to me—that it is hard to believe that the Creator of this world of pain and sin is a God of Love. It is not that men suffer. That might be the fruit of man's own sin. The whole make-up, so to speak, of this world is intimately associated with pain and death. It is the fashion with some apologists to argue that the Victorians over-stressed the idea of "Nature, red in tooth and claw." I do not think so. I can say with St. Paul that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together."³ Even if it is true that the lower forms of life feel little pain it is also true that as creatures rise in the scale of being so their power to suffer increases and the agony of the higher animals, and above all, of man, can be long drawn out and intense. I tell you quite frankly that the *Problem of Evil*, the problem of physical evil, or pain, and of moral evil, or sin, has always been to me the central problem of religion. As soon as I began to think at all I began to think of the sufferings of animals.

² 1 Kings xviii, 41.

³ Romans viii, 22.

As soon as I began to see, and to seek to understand life, I wanted to know what chance children, born in bad homes, had of virtue and of happiness.

Well! that is one reason why I am a Christian. I know of no other philosophy except the Catholic faith which can face the problem of evil. Of England's two greatest philosophers of recent times F. H. Bradley, of Oxford, or Ellis McTaggart, of Cambridge, I don't know which is more utterly unsatisfying when it comes to the question of pain and of sin. As I read their placid solutions of the problem, their assurance that if we could only get the right point of view we should see evil as a note in the universal harmony, I say to myself "These views sound all right, I dare say, in an university lecture room. How would they sound in a Hoxton slum or a back street in Salford!" But Christianity knows nothing of a perfect universe. It tells of a fallen universe needing redemption, it promises us as the end and aim of God's work in us and for us "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."⁴

Personally I have long been convinced that we shall never get our thinking right till we face the

⁴ 2 Peter iii, 13.

question of the Fall. I do not, of course, believe that all the sin and suffering of this world can be referred to the action of some one man, Adam, tempted and falling here on this earth during historical times. I do accept with all my heart the idea that Professor N. P. Williams expounds in the last chapter of his Bampton Lectures on *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*. He teaches that the whole cosmic process, from the first moment of time, was in some way corrupted and distorted. Accept this view and everything falls into its place. The evolutionary process is seen as the redemption of the physical universe, the goal being ever greater diversity in unity, just as the human frame is at once more differentiated and more truly one than that of the worms. The progress of knowledge is that we may all come to know the same truth; the progress of art is that we may all experience the same emotion; that of morals that we may all will the same good. All history is seen as the slow fulfilment of God's purpose "That, in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him."⁵

⁵ Ephes. i, 10.

But I cannot go further into the question of the Fall to-day. One thing surely we can see. If virtue, noble human character, is the one thing God desires, and so is the purpose of the universe—and I will say again that I cannot imagine what else He can or could desire, or what nobler purpose for the universe there could be—then the choice between good and evil had to be offered to man. Had God created a being incapable of sin He would have created a machine incapable also of virtue. I do not say that the Fall was necessary. I do say that *the possibility of a Fall* was necessary if God was to create free spiritual beings capable of loving and choosing Him. Some writers say that—supposing our argument to be true—God must have known that man would choose evil and not good, and if He were a God of Love would have forbore to create a world. Well! that depends on whether Heaven, an eternity of union with God, is worth while at the cost of this world of pain and sin. St. Paul thought it was, for he says “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”⁶ And anyone who has had experience, even for a

⁶ 2 Cor. iv, 17.

moment, of direct apprehension of God, and of His love, will agree with St. Paul.

Do you see what I have been doing? However imperfectly I have been trying to

assert eternal Providence

And justify the ways of God to men.

My argument is very simple. It runs:—

When men have first-hand experience of God, they find Him to be ‘pure universal Love.’

There is nothing in this world of pain and sin which rightly understood contradicts this experience of God as Love.

But if these two claims are well founded then God has created man for Himself and your task and mine is to fit ourselves for union with Him. “This is Life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.”⁷ One of the things that puzzles me is that so many men fail to see the fruits of religion in their fellow men. They not only fail to see them. They deny dogmatically that they are there. They say, as if it were a thing upon

⁷ John xvii, 3.

which everyone was agreed "Well! I can't see that religious people are any better or pleasanter than those who make no claim to religion." Do you know what that sounds like to me? It sounds as if a man said "Well! I can't see that it is any lighter at mid-day than at mid-night" and then a large roomful of people nodded wise heads and said "Why of course. There is no real difference between noon-day and mid-night." When I was an undergraduate there was here in Cambridge a very famous don, Mr. Oscar Browning, of King's. I do not think I should have claimed him as a very religious man, but he said one thing I have never forgotten. He said "Next to culture and learning, travel and a knowledge of the best art, there is nothing that gives such true refinement as a religion really believed and practised." I suppose that is really the explanation of what puzzles me. Here in Cambridge culture, refinement, education, the manners demanded by and yielded to good society make one man externally much the same as another. But as I have said already, one advantage of working in the slums is that you see humanity, as it were, naked, and if one is often appalled at the proof of how vile and cruel man

can be one is also daily amazed at the beauty of holiness in plain uneducated men and women, boys and girls. And not only true refinement but happiness in their own lives and usefulness in the lives of others. Let me give you an example. Some time ago I was talking to a meeting of unemployed lads of ages running from 16 to 25. The story of one would be the story of all. A boy leaves school at 14 and has two years of some dull, back-breaking, unskilled work during which he forgets what little he learned at school. At 16 he is sacked because he now requires an Insurance Card, and because there is a stream of boys just leaving school who will take his place at his old wages, while he after two years' work expects a rise. So he joins the crowd "standing at the corner of the street" as the chorus of a popular song says, and for the next five, perhaps ten years, is nagged at, at home, because he brings home no wages; and harried by the police for obstructing the pavement or playing football in the street, and grows daily more shabby and hopeless and unhappy, ashamed of himself and resentful at society. For just when life should be opening out before them, with promise of marriage, and the joys of family life and of a

career, there is no place for them in our civilization nor anyone who seems to need them. I spoke very straight to those lads. I did not conceal what I thought of the evil of their prospects. But I told them that there was one road to a full, useful, happy life open to them. Let them give themselves unreservedly to the life of service. Let them join some church or chapel and find in work for others the happiness they needed. I noticed one young fellow of two and twenty, whom I knew well, looking doubtful. So I turned to him and said "Do you pity your Uncle Bob?" Suddenly his face lit up and he said "Uncle Bob! No one could pity Uncle Bob. He is always happy." What does Uncle Bob do? He spends eight hours a day shovelling coal into a furnace at a gas-works. But the pleasure of his life is found in work for the children at a little Mission where he is the moving spirit in the Ragged School and the Band of Hope. I would beg you to consider this seriously. If Christ is what I take Him to be, if He is God Incarnate teaching man how to live, "leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps"⁸ then the key to real happiness must be to follow that

⁸ 1 Peter ii, 21.

example and to be in the world "as he that serveth."⁹ I have taken my example from the lowest stratum of society for two reasons; firstly because, as I have said, it is always easier to see human nature as it is among the very poor than when it is glossed and cloaked by the conventions of society; and secondly because the power of religion shows itself more wonderfully in such surroundings. But look for yourselves and judge for yourselves. Is it not true that men and women are happiest in proportion as their happiness is sought not in self but in others, not in getting but in giving. And the best object for love and service and self-sacrifice is God. And the second best is God's image, any brother who needs your help.

But this life of self-sacrifice and of service—which is man's true life, and his highest happiness—is one that we cannot live in our own power. Here is a strange paradox. The life of self-sacrifice and of service *is* the happiest life. We know it with absolute certainty. When we live it we say "This is my true life. This is what I ought to be. This suits me." Yet knowing that we have, in ourselves, no power to live that life. Does not

⁹ Luke xxii, 27.

St. Paul say "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do?"¹⁰ Just so too one of my Salford boys, a high-spirited, weak-willed, charming unstable boy once said to me, in a burst of confidence, "I don't know why I ever do wrong. I'm always miserable when I do." For the good that he would he did not; and the evil that he would not, that he did.

And here we touch a yet more fundamental truth of human nature. There is a power stronger than all the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."¹¹ And thousands, hundreds of thousands beside St. Paul have been able to say "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."¹² The plain truth, the most fundamental truth, about man is that he is made to be dwelt in and controlled by God. There is a comparison which I have used so often that I am almost ashamed to use it again. But it does so perfectly express my meaning that I can use no other. Suppose someone hands you an electric bulb. It is wonderfully made, a very triumph of technical skill. *But if you have not got*

¹⁰ Rom. vii, 19.

¹² Phil. iv, 13.

¹¹ Acts i, 8.

electricity laid on in your rooms it is quite useless, utterly without object or purpose. But if you have got electricity laid on, if into that bulb can flow all the power it can contain from the great dynamo at the power station, then it glows, then it is beautiful, then it brings brightness and light to everything in the room. Even so is man. He is "fearfully and wonderfully made."¹³ But until God comes into him there is nothing so dull, so ineffectual, so useless. But let God come in and possess him and immediately he knows, and all the world knows, that now he is his true self. The heart of man was made for God, said St. Augustine, and is restless till it find rest in Him. And I heard the same thought, quaintly expressed, by an old Wesleyan local preacher speaking on a croft outside a Lancashire cotton mill. He said "It just comes to this, brothers. God just suits me and I suit Him."

If this claim, namely that man is a being made to be dwelt in, and controlled by, God is true, then it is the supreme truth about man. Those who leave God out of their reckoning are like men who wire a house, and supply it amply with electric bulbs and radiators and motors, but

¹³ Psalm cxxxix, 14.

never connect it with the electric generating-station. All their efforts are fore-doomed to come to nothing.

And on which side does truth lie? Read what you will of the sayings of our new prophets, from Mr. Bertrand Russell's now almost forgotten essay, *A Free Man's Worship*, published more than thirty years ago, to Mr. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. What do they offer?

Mr. Bertrand Russell assures us that "Brief and powerless is man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way." Mr. Huxley looks at the brave new world which his teaching offers us and turns away, it must be admitted with no little excuse, as if he were going to be sick. And all the while men and women by thousands are finding the life of service, lived in the power and under the guidance of a Living Christ, a rich happy joyful thing fruitful of good to themselves and others. If I had no other argument—and I have many—I might still urge this one, namely that this pessimistic agnosticism will never nerve men to set this distracted world to

rights. So to-day I summon you to the life of service lived in the power of an entire and whole-hearted surrender to Christ.

To-morrow I hope to speak of the supreme example of victorious sacrifice, the Cross of Christ.

THE INCARNATION AND THE ATONEMENT

God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Gal. vi, 14.

THERE is a strong objection, on the part of many people to-day, to what is known as "blood theology." Many of the hymns, once popular with our parents and grandparents, are declared to be uncongenial to the modern mind. Many, even among sincere and devout Christians, say that too much talk about sin repels young people, and that the Twentieth Century should discard a presentation of religion based—I quote a leading journalist, a friend of mine—on ideas derived from the "primitive blood sacrifices of a barbarous Semitic tribe." Well! I am not so sure, myself. I believe young people often realize the power and nature of sin more than their elders think. Let me speak plainly. A middle-aged man, with an assured position in the world, with

all things in his home and business settled and comfortable and with the probability—I say probability, not certainty, there is no certainty in this life—that things to-morrow will be pretty much what they are to-day, is inclined to desire an easy, not too exacting, not too exciting, religion. Young people, with life opening out before them with all its opportunities, but also with its dangers and difficulties, desire a religion of power and of reality, and are not inclined to grumble if it has its note of sternness, of severity and of pain. Recently I was asked what was the secret of the late Bishop Gore's wonderful influence over young men. I said it lay in the fact that he scorned to offer them an easy, comfortable religion. He would not water down the demands of Christ nor pretend to pad the cross. So for my own part I do not think that talk about sin, and "blood theology" is likely to alienate young men and women to-day. Be that as it may, however, there is one thing about which there can be no dispute. If modern theologians want to get rid of the thought of the Blood of Christ, which, says St. John, "cleanseth us from all sin"¹ they will have to tear out a good many

¹ 1 John i, 7.

pages of their Bibles. That by itself might not be conclusive. We are not Mohammedans tied to a book. To-day as much as when He was first given, the Holy Spirit has fresh truth to impart and is ever guiding us "into all truth."² But there are some things we cannot overlook.

(i) The first preaching of the apostles was preaching of "Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."³ That was the Gospel of Christ which proved to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"⁴

(ii) The times of revival, of spiritual power, of missionary advance at home and abroad have been the times when the Cross has been preached. There are periods in church history during which the Church consolidated her gains and found in the doctrine of the Incarnation a principle of explanation, a key, so to speak, to her intellectual problems. But the periods of the Church's advance, the times when she has not been consolidating old gains but victoriously seeking new ones, have been when her preaching has been of the Atonement. Have you ever stood at the end

² John xvi, 13.

⁴ Rom. i, 16.

³ I Cor. i, 23.

of a long dull street at dusk on a winter's afternoon, as darkness was falling and watched the lamp-lighter go down it. One by one the lamps spring to light, dotting the darkness. So as one reads Church history one can stand looking down the long pathway of man's history and can see it dotted with bright lights, the light of periods of spiritual awakening. And of each you can say "There the preaching was of the Atonement, of Christ Crucified."

(iii) And as it has been in the past, so it is now. You understand that I am not now preaching a Mission. That is the task of my brother missionary. I am only giving the mission instructions in doctrine. But I do take missions. If I live till next November I shall take my twenty-ninth mission. And the tale of them all is one and the same; success has been in proportion to the extent that Christ crucified has been preached. It is the Cross that draws.

But why is this so? People assure me that the idea of vicarious suffering, of the righteous suffering for the wicked, is revolting to our ideas of justice, and that we dishonour God when we represent Him as accepting the sacrifice of Calvary as "a full perfect and sufficient sacrifice,

oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." Strange, is it not, how differently different people look at things. The Cross of Christ always seems to me to be the most natural, the most reasonable, I had almost said the most human and homely thing in the world. It is just what I want. You know the full title of the book we call Butler's Analogy? It is *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*. Well, I should like to write a book on the Atonement to be called *The Analogy of the Cross of Christ to the Constitution and History of Man*. For surely the one out-standing fact of history is this, that the power to suffer is the power to save. Every scout-master and guide-mistress worthy of the name knows that to be true. Their power to help their young friends is in exact proportion to the extent to which the ill-doing of any boy or girl hurts them. I have been working with boys for not far short of fifty years and I have failed with many. I do not say, I do not think, that the boys I have failed with have been free from blame. But I have often felt that if I had cared more, if the lad's ill-doing had hurt me more, if it had made me sweat and sweat blood, I might have saved him.

Here are two descriptions, one of St. Michael the Archangel as shown in a picture in the National Gallery—the description is by Ruskin in *Modern Painters*—and the other of Christ, as seen in a vision by Malvolti, the Italian who, after a life stained by every crime, is dragging out the end of his life as a blind beggar in Rome—the description is taken from that beautiful, but I fear forgotten, novel *John Inglesant*. The first runs:

God has put His power upon him, resistless radiance is on his limbs; no lines are there of earthly strength, no trace on the divine features of earthly anger; trustful and thoughtful, fearless but full of love, incapable except of the repose of eternal conquest, vessel and instrument of omnipotence, filled like a cloud with the victor-light, the dust of principalities and powers beneath his feet, the murmur of hell against him heard by his spiritual ear like the winding of a shell on a far-off shore.

Well! there you have the victorious Archangel as Ruskin describes him. And the other description runs:

He came down the steps into the Campidoglio, and He came to me. He was not at all like the pictures of the saints; for He was pale, and worn, and thin, as though the fight was not half over—ah no!—but through this pale and worn look shone infinite power, and undying love, and unquenchable resolve. . . . Among ten thousand times ten thousand I should know Him, and amid the tumult of a universe I should hear the faintest whisper of His voice.

And there you have the crucified Son of God. Well! which do you prefer? And if you were down and out, utterly down and out and beaten, and knew that it was your own fault, and knew that you had no power of yourself to help yourself which would you turn to: the Archangel, to whom the murmur of hell is as the winding of a shell on a far-off shore, or to Christ pale and worn and thin who carried the Cross up Calvary and died between two thieves?

People say now-a-days that the story of the Atonement, the story of God suffering with and for His people, is no more than a projection of our own desires. But that is not true. The

natural man has always looked for deliverance to victorious strength, to the warrior, the avenger. Where else in human history do you find any record of men looking to a defeated and condemned sufferer for help and salvation? The Cross has always been, the Cross is to-day, "unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."⁵ Yes, the wisdom of God no less than the power. For the paradox of human nature, the paradox which is foolishness to the wise Greeks who spend their lives "in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing"⁶ but an obvious truth to those who are at daily grips with the realities of life, is that the sinner needs for his salvation one who is down with him in the mire and dirt, and yet who is, at the same time up above him with feet set on a rock. And though in twice ten centuries there have been, thanks be to God, many who have learned that truth and become imitators of Christ, I know of no one who could have taught that lesson to the world except One who was at once the Son of God and also "in all points

⁵ 1 Cor. i, 23.

⁶ Acts xvii, 21.

tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”⁷ What shall I say of the story of the Cross? Shall I call it the most wonderful thing in the world; or shall I call it the most natural, the most homely, the most inevitable?

But how does the Cross save? I cannot offer you a complete theory of the Atonement. There is no such thing and there never will be. Yet it is not difficult to see how the Cross meets our needs. For what are the results of sin? They are threefold; a perverted intellect so that a man can no longer judge rightly between good and evil; corrupted affections, so that he no longer loves the good or hates the evil; weakened will, so that he can no longer do good or resist evil even when he would. This is no mere academic classification, suitable for a lecture on psychology in the classroom of a theological college. It is the description of facts which meet us daily in every-day life. Do you remember the seven gifts of the spirit spoken of at Confirmation; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and the spirit of holy fear? We may alter the names and speak

⁷ Heb. iv, 15.

of wisdom, sympathy, wise advice, moral strength, teachableness, goodness and reverence. It is wonderful how I find these things, wherever there is real goodness, in plain uneducated men and women, boys and girls; in working men, and mothers in back streets, and boys and girls of elementary education. But I do not ask you to trust my judgment. Judge for yourself. Do you know any deeply religious men or women of little education or culture; an elderly farmer or groom or gamekeeper; an old nurse or servant? If you wanted advice on some matter of real importance, something that touched the interests and the life of yourself or of the girl you love, whose advice would you prefer: the advice of such a man or woman as I have suggested or that of a man of loose life and bad principles who had taken a double first and spoke five languages? I am not undervaluing education. Heaven forbid. I am saying that the spirit of God enlightens the eyes when matters of real life are under discussion and that sin darkens the understanding. And as the Spirit of God illuminates the mind and braces the will and purifies the affections so sin weakens and defiles them all. Here again I am not talking to you

of things I have read in text-books of ethics or psychology. I am speaking of what I have known and seen. I remember how, thirty-five years ago, a great consulting surgeon in Leeds said to me of a wretched boy we were trying to help, "The lad's first need is a new backbone and that is an operation that is outside my powers. We must look to religion, not to surgery for that. It's your job, not mine." And I have seen Christ perform that operation more times than I can count. For the sinner looks at Christ Crucified and Risen again, Christ who has known all our sins and all our temptations and has never fallen but always triumphed, and sees One who has and is what he needs to have and to be. Whose will should be more strong than His who met all the temptations of the Passion and met them triumphantly? Who will hate sin and love righteousness more than He upon whom sin brought such sufferings? How will His eyes be enlightened who passed through so much untouched? We need to think of the fruits of the Passion, the fruits of victorious resistance of evil. The sinner can look at Christ on the Cross—unnumbered thousands have so looked—and say "He is what I ought to be.

He has suffered what I deserve. He has gained the fruits of victory that I need." All that Jesus is and has done, and all that I lack stand opposite to one another like the two sides of some great soaring arch, each one the exact reflection of the other.

And what is the key-stone which knits those two sides together? How shall Christ's work meet and satisfy my need?

By the mystical union of the soul with Christ.

When I can say "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"⁸ then I can claim for myself and as my own all that Christ has done, all that He is. It is strange how small a place this thought of the mystical union of the soul with Christ plays in official theology; and strange how little use theologians make of it. It is the very stuff, the very substance of St. Paul's thinking. All the mystics speak of it as a thing which they have experienced. It is implicit in the sacramental doctrine of our Book of Common Prayer both in connection with Holy Baptism and the Holy Communion. I need only remind you of the petition in the Baptismal Service "that the old

⁸ Gal. ii, 20.

Adam in this child may be so buried *that the new man may be raised up in him.*" And this thought of the union and identification of the soul with Christ sings in Charles Wesley's hymns. But I only know three writers who seem to me to make adequate use of it in dogmatic theology: William Law, and John Wesley who learned it from him, and the late Dr. R. C. Moberley, whose great book *Atonement and Personality*, is little more than an exposition and defence of this doctrine.

But it need not remain a doctrine of dogmatic theology to any of my hearers. For each one of you it should be a blessed experience, a thing known and proved and gloried in. When I and my brother Missioner remember you in prayer it will be as our spiritual children with whom we travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.⁹

And now, but not I think till now, we can approach the subject of the Virgin Birth. He who has no experience of Christ as Saviour and God may well feel difficulties about this doctrine. He who knows what it is for which he looks to Christ, and what it is that Christ brings to him will, I fancy, find it hard to disbelieve. I want

⁹ Gal. iv, 19.

Christ to be indeed the Second Adam¹⁰ a new beginning for our race. Preaching in Manchester some years ago, I said that if nothing had been said about the Virgin Birth in Holy Scripture I could not have taught it as part of the Catholic Faith. But, I declared, I should still have believed it myself, and taught it as a pious opinion. A prominent liberal critic described this as "a piece of ecclesiastical bravado." Not at all. I know what I need. I need a new nature. I do not say that God could not have sent us such a new nature at the hands of a Saviour born by natural generation. I do say that the Virgin Birth appears to me most congruous. God the Holy Ghost, the creative agent in the first creation here does a new work and, of the substance of the Virgin Mary, brings into the world a new nature, a new humanity which you and I may put on as a garment. "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ,"¹¹ and "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature."¹²

I was discussing the question of the Virgin Birth quite recently with a devout doctor, a man to whom it would be impossible to deny the

¹⁰ 1 Cor. xv, 45.

¹² 2 Cor. v, 17.

¹¹ Gal. iii, 27.

title of Christian. He said that he unhesitatingly accepted the teaching of the Church about the Resurrection, and believed Christ to be God Incarnate; but he wished the Church would drop the article of the Creed which declared that Christ was born of a virgin as the scientific difficulties were overwhelming. Now here, of course, he was wrong. Science has *nothing to say on the matter*. Science treats of the usual, the normal, the average. The right name for a 'natural law' should be a 'norma' or statement of the normal way in which a given event takes place. Of the unique, of the individual, science knows and can know nothing. Of an event which, from its nature, can only happen once, Natural Science can say no more than, "Thus it happened. Whether, if it occurred again it would happen in the same, or in some different, way no one can say." But what is the normal method of a divine incarnation? How is God accustomed to be born on earth? Such questions need only be asked to be seen to be absurd. I do not say that a man must believe in this doctrine in order to be worthy of the name of Christian for I know many splendid Christians who reject it. I merely say that they must not call Natural Science in

evidence on the matter for Natural Science has nothing to say for or against it.

It is then a matter for History to decide, not for Natural Science. It is a matter of evidence. When I was an undergraduate it was still possible for scholars to defend the most extravagantly late dates for the gospels and I can remember my excitement when, in my curate days in South London, Harnack, of all men, came out in favour of the early date of 56-58 A.D. for St. Luke's gospel. To-day things are very different. We here in Cambridge have the authority of our Regius Professor of Divinity, Dr. Raven, for declaring that the dates after 70 A.D. are, at least for the first three gospels, more difficult to defend than the earlier dates which would make the synoptic gospels the work of the first generation of Christians.¹³ And in a work of massive learning, recently published, Dr. Lukyn Williams writing of the *Books of Testimonies*, or collections of proof-texts from the Old Testament which scholars believe were compiled by the first preachers of the faith, says "The compilers of the *Books*, even in those earliest forms which preceded the Gospels, knew of no stage of belief

¹³ *Jesus and the Gospel of Love*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1931, Chap. VI.

in Christ as only a man. On the contrary, they regarded Jesus from the very first as having been born of a Virgin, and indeed as Very God who had come down from heaven.”¹⁴

It seems almost absurd that one who is no scholar and whose life has been spent in pastoral work in poor parishes should come to Cambridge and speak to you of matters which must be decided by ripe scholarship. You have here, in every college, men better qualified than I am to guide you on such questions. But I will state, for what it is worth, my own belief. As I read St. Luke's gospel I say to myself that it clearly tells the story of the Nativity from the point of view of the Blessed Virgin. That no one will dispute. It is the story as she might have told it. But I go on to say to myself that it is either direct from her lips or else it is a most deliberate, skilful and elaborate forgery. We are clearly meant to believe that the author, who claims to have “had perfect understanding of all things from the very first,”¹⁵ is giving the account of one who “kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.”¹⁶ And why should it not be so?

¹⁴ *Adversus Judaeos*, Cambridge University Press, 1935, p. 13.

¹⁵ Luke i, 3.

¹⁶ Luke ii, 19.

If the gospel was written in the years 56-58 A.D. when St. Paul was in prison at Cæsarea, or if the materials for it were collected then, St. Luke, who would have free access to St. Paul¹⁷ would surely often have been his messenger to Jerusalem. And there at the house of St. John he would have met the Blessed Virgin. Put the Nativity if you will as early as B.C. 6; suppose that the Blessed Virgin was twenty when espoused to St. Joseph—a late age for a Jewish girl—and she would be only eighty-two when St. Luke met her. How many old ladies of that age to-day even if their memory for current events is failing, retain a vivid memory of their childhood and youth, or the days of their courtship and of the early years of their married life. Every time I read the opening chapters of the Third Gospel I say to myself “These words come to me fresh from the lips of her whom all generations have called blessed.” And I desire no better testimony to their truth.

And equally, when I turn to the account of the Nativity in the First Gospel I say that it gives us the story from the point of view of St. Joseph. I understand that scholars, to whose opinions you

¹⁷ Cf. Acts xxiv, 23.

and I must defer, hold that the gospel as we have it is not the work of St. Matthew. Yet the very early association of St. Matthew's name with it must stand for something. Hegesippus tells us that Alphæus, St. Matthew's father, was St. Joseph's brother. I believe the story of the Nativity, as we have it in this gospel, derives from a tradition, handed down, perhaps written down, in St. Matthew's family. If this indeed is so what better evidence do we require? The Virgin Birth appears a suitable method for God's incarnation. It was believed in, if we may accept the latest conclusions of scholarship, by the first generations of Christians, before the earliest gospel was written. We have evidence which seems to come direct from the only two persons, the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, qualified to speak. It is attested by the tremendous miracle—which many accept who reject the Virgin Birth—the miracle of the Resurrection, by which, as St. Paul says Christ was “declared to be the Son of God with power.”¹⁸ What is there to set against all this? Nothing but the *a priori* conviction that it cannot be true.

I make no apology for treating of this matter

¹⁸ Romans i, 4.

at such length. It cannot be one of little moment. It seems to me to stand in a very different position from the recorded miracles of the Old Testament, both as regards intrinsic importance and historical evidence. For my own part, if I were forced to believe that two out of the four gospels opened with untrustworthy legends I should have to revise my attitude on such matters as the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the reality of divine providence and the nature of inspiration. Yet when all this has been said I should still say that the question of the Virgin Birth was of infinitely less importance than the question of the Atonement. Christianity is not a system of beliefs but a life, and your attitude towards Christ, and mine, must be something closer and more personal than is involved in a mere acceptance of historical statements. So if any young man or young woman said to me "I unhesitatingly accept Jesus Christ as my divine Saviour, as my Master and Guide, and as the Lord of my life; but about the Virgin Birth I still find difficulties," I should not be ill content. I should say, "Set your heart to do His will and you shall 'know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.'"¹⁹

¹⁹ John vii, 17.

THE CHURCH AND THE SACRAMENTS

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. Ephesians ii, 19.

I DO not know that there is any subject that I could discuss with you more difficult, or more important, than that of the Church. I am myself deeply convinced of two things; firstly, that nothing can save western civilization from complete collapse except a great revival of vital personal religion, and secondly, that such a revival must come, if it comes at all, in and through the churches. I have no belief whatever in non-institutional religion. I am not blind to the fact that many individuals who have separated themselves wholly from all denominations nevertheless live good, useful and even deeply spiritual lives. That no doubt is possible for some individuals, though even they, it seems to me, lose much through this religious isolation. But if it is possible for some individuals, I do not

believe that it would be possible for most men. I am sure it would not be possible for an entire nation. For me the Church is the Body of Christ,¹ and a non-institutional Christianity would be a disembodied spirit, unable to work at all in such a world as this. And so I for one could not live nor work without "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."²

But I am not merely anxious to have a church for you young men and women. I am anxious to claim you young men and women for the church. The last time we had a parochial mission in my parish we took as our slogan the words, "We need you, You need us." I will not discuss again—I have discussed it too often and too fully elsewhere for that to be necessary—the contention that members of the churches are no more active in unselfish work for others than those who make no religious professions. But I will frankly admit that the churches are lamentably weak. Can you wonder? If it is true, as the newspapers so often tell us, that not more than ten per cent of the population are attached to any denomination what can you expect? If it were the other way, if there were real unity between the various

¹ Col. i, 24. ² 1 Tim. iii, 15.

denominations and if they claimed the adherence of ninety per cent of the population instead of ten I believe there is no problem with which we are faced to-day, from war to unemployment, which would not be easily solved. I want the Church for youth and I want youth for the Church.

But what is the situation to-day? Unfortunately, whereas I believe there is a growing interest in religion among the men and women of our universities and medical schools, and even, if we may believe Mr. T. S. Eliot, a renewed interest in theology, there is, I fear, little increase of interest in the Church. Rather there seems to be a growing impatience with the Church and a distaste for her services. It was a young Oxford man who wrote to me recently and said "I do not think I am really irreligious; but the plain truth is I have no use for the Church of England and none for any other denomination either." What is the cause of this? It may well be that in trying to find the cause I shall fail to get to the real root of the matter. If so, I hope some of you will tell me. I am here to learn no less than to teach. But it seems to me that there are two main causes for this distaste for the Church.

One affected me when I came up to St. John's in 1889; the other may have affected some of my contemporaries, but it is, I fancy, peculiar to the present day.

Let me take the one that affected me first. I have always been interested in religion from the time I was quite a small boy. And I never had the slightest reluctance in going to Church. Rather I enjoyed it and I can recall sermons heard when I was under twelve years old. But when I first came up to Cambridge I certainly resented what I may call the dogmatic claims of the Church. Why should I be told what to believe? Why should creeds and dogmas be offered for my acceptance? If anything could be proved to be true I should be eager to accept it. But what place, I asked, could authority have in belief?

Now I am sure that what I then felt was based on a complete misunderstanding of the Church's attitude. People used to make much of the so-called damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed—and would doubtless do the same to-day if the creed were in general use—but such clauses were, so to speak, common form in past ages and meant little more than the Amen at the end of

a hymn. To-day the Church offers her creeds in a very different spirit. It always seems to me that the truths which the Church propounds for our acceptance fall into three classes; things which if a man denies he will not desire to claim membership, as for instance the existence of God; and things on which any man may be glad to have guidance—since as the late Lord Balfour used to say there are some seemingly attractive ways of thought which have been so often and so fruitlessly explored that they ought to be marked “No Thoroughfare”—of which the omnipotence of God and His creative activity are examples; and things which are an integral part of the Christian Revelation and which, therefore, are presented as facts not to be arrived at by man’s unassisted reason. What then should be the attitude of any young man to the creeds and doctrines of the Church? In this, as in all things, I seek my answer from experience. Some three or four years after I came to my present parish a tall over-grown boy of fifteen came up to me at the end of the Bible Class and informed me, with North Country directness that he did not believe half I said. I replied “I’m sure you don’t, Tom. I should be shocked if you did. You will

never believe anything till you have tested it for yourself. 'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good'³ is the text for you, my lad." I could not have said that if I had not known him to be incorruptibly honest, good and sincere. Since then I have seen him grow into one of the finest Christians, intellectually, morally and practically, that I know. He has always had too much sense to attack religion for the sake of attacking it; but he has steadily refused to declare his belief in anything of which he has not been convinced. Accepting the Church's teaching as a working hypothesis he has found it verifiable in daily life. Let me recommend the same course to any of you who still find difficulty in belief. *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* I am not afraid of my religion having to stand the test of experience. And with this advice let me add three other rules which I gave, with very happy results, to a young man more than five and twenty years ago. If you want to earn a religion of your own—and no second-hand religion is worth much—observe three rules:

Be good. "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which

³ 1 Thess. v, 21.

war against the soul.”⁴ It is the pure in heart who see God.

Be in earnest. Believe that there is something worth learning, and that that something is worth striving for. A brilliant journalist wrote to me once “You speak of religion as a struggle and an experience. I gave up the struggle years ago; so perhaps I have no right to the experience.”

Be humble. Remember that you have still much to learn. Was it not Isaac Newton who, when all the world was praising his intellectual achievements, said of himself that he was like a child by the seashore picking up here a pebble and there a pebble out of the millions lying at his feet. Nothing is more characteristic of the really great man of science than his profound humility. We who seek to know God might well learn this lesson of humility from those who seek to know God’s universe.

But there is another reason for youth’s impatience with the Church. You find her social activities ineffective, when there is so much good work to be done; you find her services dull and lacking in beauty, when music, poetry and art

⁴ 1 Peter ii, 11.

have so much to contribute if the Church would but use what is offered; you find her sympathies narrow and parochial when there are so many noble causes languishing for just that lead which the Church could give if she would. I agree. I unhesitatingly admit the truth of every word of this criticism. And shall I tell you where the fault lies? It lies with the critics themselves. Here again I can perhaps make my point clear by an example drawn from experience. When I was a curate at Leeds a lady, a well-known artist and book illustrator, said to me one day, "It is no wonder that my artistic friends stay away from Church when everything in the Churches is so ugly." I replied, "You have got that sentence the wrong way round. You ought to have said 'It is no wonder that everything in the Churches is so ugly when all my artistic friends stay away.'" Since then I have met that type of objection again and again. People keen on this, that or the other reform separate themselves from organised religion because they say the Church is doing nothing in the matter. Do you see the fallacy? The Church is a co-operative society. Perhaps the thing you find lacking in her is the thing you were meant to

supply. If I had the ability of a modern Æsop I would write a fable telling how the salt, disgusted by the tastelessness and insipidity of the soup, got out of it and sat in a pot by itself. But the soup was not the only loser. No one eats salt by itself. And the man who insists on working by himself, and lacks the inspiration and fellowship of others, effects little. And there is another aspect of the matter. If you become an active member of a Church you learn that you are not the only pebble on the beach nor your good cause the only one that needs support. If other people are to work with you, you must be prepared to work with other people. You must be prepared to lead and not drive; to persuade and not try to constrain; to give and take; to be patient with other men's slowness and dullness and selfishness and lack of faith; to learn that you too have faults which you did not suspect. The Church of God is best described as a city, the *Civitas Dei*, and in it we learn the civic virtues of tolerance, self-restraint, civility, mutual helpfulness, love. You have heard, often I expect, the complaints about there being so much squabbling, bickering and petty jealousy in churches. Exactly! It is because poor human

nature is slow to acquire those civic virtues which are required in the City of God.

People often complain of the poor standard attained by the preaching, of the indifferent singing, of the inartistic character of the ornaments and vestments, and even of the discomfort of the seats. But if you had at every street corner a church where the preaching put the great masters of oratory to shame, where the music and singing reached the level of a Wagner opera at Covent Garden, and where the artistic effects of furnishing and lighting, and the comfort of the seating, out-did a super-cinema, *and all for a threepenny bit in the collection*, would religion benefit? I cannot think so. Public worship is not something offered by the church officials to the congregation, but something offered by the congregation to God. And it must be the expression of the heart and mind of the congregation. I should be glad to see a nobler, more refined, more intellectual and more artistic worship in our churches if it witnessed to a nobler, more refined, intellectual and artistically awakened mind in our nation. And the Church should, I am sure, constantly try to educate the nation to a higher level in these matters, and to counteract

the influence of whatever may be degrading in the press, the theatre, the cinema and current literature. But here, as everywhere, the Church must lead not drive, must seek to draw out from her children the best that is in them rather than to impose on them from without a culture they are not ready for. And in the meanwhile you young men and women will get nearer to your fellow-men, and so nearer to God, by trying to enter into and share the life and worship of a congregation than by any private devotions, just because such sharing in public worship is so difficult.

The thing the world stands in greatest need of to-day is the spirit of sympathy, of understanding. We used to think that as means of locomotion and communication, the steam engine, the post office, telegrams, telephones, wireless and the rest of it, brought men and nations nearer and nearer to one another, old hatreds and antagonisms would vanish. Not at all. When men come to know one another better and to live closer together they may easily hate one another more. And so I say again nothing is so much needed to-day as sympathetic understanding. And worship, real worship, not mere occupation of

neighbouring pews, is the best way to such understanding. For the collects⁵ of our Prayer Book speak of the Church as God's 'family' and 'household,' and in it we meet His children and learn to know and to love them. If I may apply to public worship some words which a favourite book of mine uses in another connection, I would say that it prepares us, while we are young "to receive in after years (for it is a lesson that cannot be fully learned until middle life is approached) that kindly love of humanity; that sympathy with its smallest interests; that toleration of its errors, and of its conflicting opinions; that interest in local and familiar affairs, in which the highest culture is at one with the unlearned rustic mind."⁶ "Man," says Aristotle, "is a social animal." If that is true—and I am sure it is—I shall expect his social qualities and his social needs to show themselves at their highest in those things where man himself reaches his highest point, namely, in his communion with God, and his communion with God's other children.

⁵ Collect for Good Friday, "this thy family"; for 22nd Sunday after Trinity, "thy household, the Church."

⁶ *John Inglesant*, by John Shorthouse (Macmillan), Chap. III.

But I have spent too long in discussing the things which keep some young men and women from full and whole-hearted membership of a congregation. And perhaps I have not yet reached the real reasons. If so you must tell me. But I want to go on to other matters.

One of the many advantages of growing old is that one can look back and see how Christ's religion and Christ's Church have been attacked now from this side and now from that, and how the grounds of attack cancel out, so to speak. When I was an undergraduate there still lingered some echoes of that particular form of attack on orthodox Christianity which is represented in Fichte's well-known saying, "It is the metaphysical that saves us; not the historical." The argument was that a mere historic event, a mere happening in time, could never save you. You are saved, according to this view, by the "idea of Christ," not by something that happened nineteen centuries before you were born, and in Judea. We need not discuss the matter further. Yet this we may say: rightly understood this teaching is profoundly true. Though Christ's death on Calvary was, indeed, the "one oblation of Himself once offered, a full, perfect and

sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world," yet it could not save you and me if all that we could say about it were that it happened on Calvary. But the sacraments have been most truly described as *the extension of the Incarnation*. By the activity of the Holy Ghost—working chiefly, though not exclusively, in and through the Sacraments—that which Christ did *for* us on Calvary He now does in us day by day. I do not think there is any thought so fundamental to St. Paul's whole attitude as that of the absolute identification of the believer with Christ. He does not only say, "I am crucified with Christ."⁷ He says to the Colossians, "If ye then be risen with Christ,"⁸ and to the Corinthians he says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."⁹ But this thought of the identification of the soul with Christ is not merely Pauline. It is implicit in all the New Testament books. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of being "made partakers of Christ."¹⁰ St. Peter speaks of being "partakers of Christ's sufferings."¹¹ But I would not have you rest on texts; nor trust in any second-hand

⁷ Gal. ii, 20.

⁸ Col. iii, 1.

⁹ 2 Cor. v, 17.

¹⁰ Heb. iii, 14.

¹¹ 1 Peter iv, 13.

religion. Prove these things for yourselves. One of the strongest supports for faith is the way in which one can see how simple and uneducated people—and, if I may judge from the very slight acquaintance I had with Kaffir Christians in South Africa, new converts in heathen lands—do indeed find the life of Christ strong in them when the Sacraments are used with faith.

I have no desire to offer you any particular doctrine of the Sacraments. I think the position of the Church of England in this matter is infinitely wise. She unhesitatingly asserts the facts; but she offers no explanation. She says of Holy Baptism that “this Child is regenerate,” and declares that in baptism the infant is indeed, made “a member of Christ,” and enjoys “a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.” She says that in the Holy Communion “the Body and Blood of Christ . . . are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful.” She offers no explanation. And when indiscreet theologians go beyond her teaching and try to explain the inexplicable, I never find myself helped. An analogy, a comparison, may be helpful. Any attempted explanation is, to me, at any rate, the reverse of helpful. My own

sacramental doctrine might be summed up in two words; the words *Real Presence*. Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you."¹² And that is just what He does do in the Sacraments. In Baptism He comes and plants in us the first germs of the new life. In confirmation—not a Sacrament of the Gospel, nor necessary for all, but none the less truly a means of sacramental grace—He strengthens the life given in Holy Baptism, and enriches it with gifts of grace. In Holy Communion He feeds that life with life which is His own. In Sacramental Confession—again not a Sacrament of the Gospel, nor necessary for all but, as millions have proved for themselves, full of power and help—He, the Perfect Penitent gives us, when we most need them, "double portions of His grace,"¹³ the grace of hatred of sin, and love of holiness and strengthened will. In Ordination He who is our great High Priest gives to those who are called to execute the priest's office a sacred consecration, and share of His priestly power and gifts. And so in all the sacraments and sacramental acts of life. God, as has been truly said, has nothing to give but Himself. And

¹² John xiv, 18.

¹³ See Hymn 148, A. & M., verse 4.

we need nothing but Him. And the whole of sacramental doctrine may be summed up in the declaration that in the Sacraments, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, "Christ is formed in you"¹⁴ as St. Paul says, that "ye might be partakers of the divine nature"¹⁵ as we read in the second epistle of Peter.

But remember this: the most fundamental ethical principle of Christianity is respect of the individual. In the late Dr. Illingworth's book *Personality, Human and Divine* he shows how it is a plain fact of history that respect of man simply as man, respect for a man not because he is clever, or handsome, or attractive, or useful but because he is a man, a human being, is a purely Christian product. The noblest Athenian that ever lived would have been quite unmoved by the motto and seal of the Society for Abolition of Negro Slavery, the seal showing the kneeling slave lifting up his chained hands and saying, *Am not I too a man and a brother*. Socrates himself would have lacked the key to their meaning. It was only discovered, and placed in every man's hand, when the poorest, most benighted savage was recognised as "a brother . . . for whom Christ

¹⁴ Gal. iv, 19.

¹⁵ 2 Peter i, 4.

died.”¹⁶ And mark this: where faith in Christ is surrendered, or grows weak, this same reverence for the individual weakens too, and man is looked on as a mere means to the power and greatness of the State, and man is for the State instead of the State being for man.

What has this to do with sacramental doctrine? It has this to do with it. That deep loving respect for the freedom and the rights of personality which God bids us shew to others He Himself shews to us. He won't force you. He will not outrage your personality nor compel your surrender. What God does for you must be done with your own consent. The grace of God must co-operate with your faith. Still it is often true that Christ can do no mighty works for us because of our unbelief.¹⁷ And your faith must work through the whole of your nature. The faith that saves the whole man must be the expression of the entire personality. It is not a matter merely of belief. The will must have its part, choosing Christ; the affections must have their part, loving Him. And the work of getting rid of the old nature, and of having the new nature raised up in us is not done in a day. St. Paul speaks of

¹⁶ 1 Cor. viii, 11.

¹⁷ Cf. Matt. xiii, 58.

this doing away of our old nature as the crucifixion of the old man. He says, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him."¹⁸ But crucifixion was a long painful process. On the first Good Friday, in the evening Pilate marvelled if Jesus were already dead.¹⁹ And some men lived for days upon the cross. So the crucifixion of our old nature is a slow and painful business. And, if I may change the metaphor, the use of our spiritual weapons is not learned in a day. To gain mastery in prayer, to gain the "comfort of the scriptures"²⁰ (wonderful phrase!), to know how to worship not only with our fellow-men but "with angels and archangels and with all the company of Heaven"; these are things worth taking trouble about. And perhaps the whole of a long life may not be too long for the task.

¹⁸ Rom. vi, 6.

¹⁹ Cf. Mark xv, 44.

²⁰ Rom. xv, 4.

THE LIFE OF SERVICE

I am among you as he that serveth. Luke xxii, 27.

Let me begin this, my last address to you, with a profession of faith. One thing surely is necessary in every life, namely a purpose. As I said to you in my first address the chief condemnation which we can pass on much modern teaching about life—the chief condemnation, I say and a final one, for if it is true no other condemnation is needed—is that it represents life as having no goal, no purpose, no meaning. And the glory of Christianity seems to me to be this that it offers us a worthy purpose. This then is my profession of faith. If anyone asks me what is the purpose of man's existence I shall say that the supreme end of man's being is, in the beautiful words of the Scotch Catechism "to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever"; and that from that supreme end two subsidiary ends are deducible, which are (i) to build up a noble character and (ii) to be a fellow-labourer

with God in the redemption of a world. These are ends noble enough to earn man's loyalty and enthusiasm. And yet they are ends which can be pursued and attained in the humblest walks of life. Let us look at the three things. We will call them

- (a) The glory of God
- (b) The fashioning and training of a soul
- (c) The service of one's fellow men.

With regard to the first, men often tell me that religion is a purely private and personal matter, a matter between the individual soul and God. That surely must be wrong. Let me recall what I said in the last lecture. Five and twenty centuries ago Aristotle described man as a social being. And one of the fathers of English philosophy said of the life of man apart from society that it was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." And everyday experience proves the truth of these sayings. Man is indeed a social being. And as man ascends from the savage, and as he rises in the scale of civilization he becomes more, not less, dependent, for all his best goods, on co-operation with his fellows and on the life of the community. Can it be that that which is true of the rest of his

nature is found untrue when we speak of religion? Is man one thing in every other relation in life but something different at his highest and best? Surely not! Here too man must be a social being, one who accepts and enjoys all the benefits and all the obligations of the divine society and schools himself in the duties of a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem.

But there is a very old, and very true maxim of the mystics which runs *Only like knows like*. If then you are to know God—and no truer words have ever been spoken than the words “This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent”¹—you must be god-like; that is to say godly. And here we come to morality and the building of a character. Now I desire to speak quite frankly to you on this matter. The whole question of morality has been complicated by the failure of many of our teachers—mothers, schoolmasters, parsons and others—to recognise that morality is a living growing thing and that the very fact that a thing was “good enough for your father and grandfather” may be proof that it is not and cannot be good enough for me.

¹ John xvii, 3.

New occasions teach new duties
Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward,
Who would keep abreast of Truth.

But surely as man rises in the scale of being, as he is brought into closer and closer contact with ever larger numbers of his fellow men, and as life grows more and more complicated, duty must make greater, not less, claims on everyone of us. May I take what may seem at first a rather childish illustration. A little boy playing by himself in a garden, bowling his hoop, can do little injury to himself and none to anyone else. The same boy, grown to be a man, and driving a powerful motor-car down a crowded street, may kill or injure himself and others. As man becomes more civilized and life becomes more complicated morality must, it would seem, make more and more claims on the individual. Some years ago I was lecturing on Christian Ethics at one of our Theological Colleges and as I invited free criticism and discussion at the end of each lecture one student said that he refused to have his conduct dictated by the obsolete rules of a semi-barbarous Semitic tribe, a thousand years before Christ. I

G-f

said that I quite agreed with him; but was he prepared to have his conduct dictated, or even limited, by any rules or was he claiming to do, in all things, as he pleased. He thought for a moment or two—I felt at the time that he was a thoughtful and intelligent man, sincerely anxious to face facts and to speak the truth—and then said that he did not want to feel bound and limited by a lot of restrictions, a lot of “don’ts”; he wanted to give full and free expression to the whole of his nature. To do otherwise, he declared, was to be to some extent maimed and stunted. But he was wrong, of course. Life has been described as “one of the fine arts” and art involves selection, rejection, limitation. Restraint, says Goethe, reveals the master. There are some things which are wrong for all men, because they are incompatible with any life that can be called good. And there may well be things, not wrong in themselves, which may yet be wrong for me, because they would be incompatible with the life I have chosen. A painter, preparing his canvas for a picture, may choose whether he will paint a landscape or a portrait, a Cathedral or a cottage interior. When he has chosen there will be things he will have to leave out. And the higher and nobler his

choice, the more sacrifices he will have to make. If I may vary my metaphor I would say that the men who hope to climb Mount Everest will have to discard many things which would be in place on a day's picnic in Surrey.

This claim, which we hear so often to-day, to do as we like and to give the reign to every impulse is nothing new. It is a philosophy which has never lacked men to preach it since the days of Epicurus. To-day it is advanced in the strength of a false psychology. Do as you will, lest you set up a complex, an inhibition. When I was at college it was preached in the interests of a fashionable æstheticism. Do as you will, lest you miss some moment of exquisite living. And the verdict of history on life so lived has been the same in every age. Read the words of "the Preacher, the son of David, King in Jerusalem"² as set out in the first eleven verses of the second chapter of the book Ecclesiastes. They are worth reading if only for the sombre beauty of the language, but most of all for the conclusion to which they lead: "I withheld not my heart from any joy . . . and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."

² Eccles. i, 1.

No! man's first task is that of self-discipline. He must be master in the house of his own being before he can achieve anything. It is curious how in enterprises of great pith and moment a man's weaknesses stand revealed. It may seem a small thing that a man should often, in daily life, avoid small unpleasantnesses and trifling obligations, by fibs and falsehoods. But the man's moral fibre is weakened. Then in some crisis of life he cannot face a situation. He lies and is found out, and for the rest of life bears the name of a man you can't rely on. I could illustrate my point from the life of more than one noted politician. To subdue the flesh to the mind, which is difficult; to school the mind, one's thoughts and feelings, to the spirit, which is so much harder; to bring the spirit into subjection to the guiding hand of the indwelling spirit of God, which is hardest of all; this is man's task in life.

I have met with the objection that this conscious seeking of a noble character tends to priggishness. So no doubt it might if it were pursued with a single eye to oneself. But the process is a double one. There is the cure of what is wrong in oneself and the attainment of what is good. The first is done by stern self-discipline and by repeated

efforts. Believe me this will not lead to priggishness. It may make you cry out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips."³ It may wring from you the cry: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death."⁴ But you must be very curiously made, something more than a saint or something lower than a man, if a steady and consistent effort at self-mastery and the cure of faults leaves you priggish and self-satisfied. My dear friends! face facts. Why is it that it has always been the greatest saints who have been most conscious of sin? St. Paul was no hypocrite, no user of conventional language and of pious insincerities. Yet he said "Sinners, of whom I am chief."⁵ And I remember how one of the finest Christians, and sanest and most normal of characters, that I have ever known once said to me: "It is not what I have done that troubles me. It is what I am that horrifies me."

As for the positive part of the business you need not think of yourself at all. Rather your eyes must be resolutely turned elsewhere. I know of no man who has the art of crystallizing a great

³ Isaiah vi, 5.

⁵ 1 Tim. i, 15.

⁴ Rom. vii, 24.

truth in a sentence as the Archbishop of York has. And I once heard him say that the art of virtuous living consisted of "behaving as if *you* were not present." Exactly! Forget self. Make the glory of God and the service of others your aim and life becomes rich and happy and successful. We strike here a fact fundamental to human nature. The self-centred man is the unhappy man. The man who forgets self and finds his interest outside himself is happy. There is a very beautiful little anonymous mediæval work called the *Theologia Germanica*, a book of mysticism which Martin Luther said that he kept on the same shelf as his Bible. In it the writer says:

"It is said, it was because Adam ate the apple that he was lost, or fell. I say it was because of his claiming something for his own, and because of his I, Mine, Me, and the like. Had he eaten seven apples, and yet never claimed anything for his own, he would not have fallen."

How true that is. The deep-seated disease of fallen man is self. And the Fall, whatever it was, whenever and wherever it occurred, can have

been nothing else than the assertion of self against the unity of mankind. And to-day the whole world is suffering from the sickness of what Mr. R. H. Tawney calls an *Acquisitive Society*. The whole of our civilization is based on the assumption that a man's life *does* consist in the abundance of the things which he possesseth,⁶ and the plain fact, verified again and again in daily experience proves that it does not. Do not misunderstand me. In a world constituted as ours is—and as far as I can see in any possible world, no matter what form of government, or organization of society we may adopt—man must work to live. It was not hardness on St. Paul's part, but true wisdom and insight which made him say that, "if any man would not work, neither should he eat."⁷ And one of the worst condemnations of our present social order is that it denies to so many men the opportunity to work. So I say to you work hard; try to earn and to keep a worthy place in life. But let even your daily work, that by which you earn your daily bread, be done in the spirit of service. May I take an illustration of what I mean. For a good many years now I have spent the first eight or ten days of August taking part

⁶ Luke xii, 15.

⁷ 2 Thess. iii, 10.

in what is known as "The Bishops' Mission on the Blackpool Sands," a mission effort conducted by the three dioceses of Manchester, Liverpool and Blackburn on the sands of that great pleasure city. A year or two ago the Mayor and Corporation entertained the Bishop of Blackburn, in whose diocese Blackpool lies, together with some of the missionaries, at luncheon. I was very much struck at the way in which the various speakers at the luncheon not merely made the missionaries welcome, and acknowledged the value and importance of their work, but expressed their own desire to be looked on as men doing a public service. More than one speaker showed plainly that they desired to be recognised as men who were not out merely to make as much money as they could, in any way that they could, but that they regarded themselves as doing a real national service in providing clean healthy amusement, in fresh air and under the best possible conditions to the teeming working-class populations of the north and midlands. Were not the men who approached their life's work in this spirit the better for it? Is not Blackpool to-day a very different city from what it would have been if this spirit were absent? I who have known the city for five and thirty years

unhesitatingly say Yes. And the Church must thank God for work so conceived and so done. If indeed it were true that, as is so often said: "A man can't be a Christian in business" then I should say that it was true that a man can't be a Christian anywhere. But it is not true. And indeed I am not sure that a man can be a better Christian anywhere than in his office or his counting-house. May I quote here something which I have written elsewhere.⁸ It runs:

"Virtue does not consist in longing for some future condition of society, where it would be possible to act with ideal rightness, but in taking this world as we find it, and resolutely endeavouring to act as nobly as possible in every situation, striving always to choose the better of two alternatives. Bishop Blougram really puts the position fairly when he says:

The common problem, yours, mine, everyone's,
Is—not to fancy what were fair in life
Provided it could be—but, finding first
What may be, then find how to make it fair
Up to our means: a very different thing!
No abstract intellectual plan of life

The Problem of Right Conduct, Longmans, 1936, p. 163.

Quite irrespective of life's plainest laws,
But one, a man, who is a man and nothing more,
May lead within a world which (by your leave)
Is Rome or London, not Fool's Paradise.

I say again there are few if any places where it is better worth while being a Christian than in a man's own place of business. And I who am daily brought into contact with business men of all classes from great merchant princes, at the head of great combines, to small men in warehouses and behind counters, am often touched by their anxiety that we clergy should recognise that they are not merely out to make money but that they have, and are guided by, a true religion. And I thank God for it. Such men are indeed the salt of the earth. Is it mere insular pride, mere British arrogance, that makes me think that the atmosphere of the business world in England is better than in most countries? At any rate we have not got the Tammany boss, the racketeer, the kidnapper! And if there is any truth in this view we owe it to the men who believe that God can be served and honoured in a man's daily work.

And now I can almost hear some of you saying "But you are talking as if only a professing Chris-

tian could be an honourable business man and a useful citizen. Cannot a man live a good life without accepting Christianity?" Of course he can. One of the noblest men I ever knew is a dogmatic atheist whom I have heard passionately denying that his universe can have been created, or can be ruled, by a good or wise God. And I suppose most of you know some man or woman whom you love and admire who is without religious convictions. But I fancy if you look carefully you will find that such people have been brought up in religious homes and that when the religious beliefs of their younger days left them the habits, the mental and emotional outlook of those days continued. For the connection between belief and practice is closer and more intimate than was supposed in those distant pre-War days when men assured us that it did not matter what a man believed as long as his life were good. Your life may be good, but its goodness will surely take a different form according as you regard your fellow man as "only an infinitesimal and transitory element in the social organization" (I quote from a speech by the Italian Minister of Justice) or as an immortal being, made in God's image, a brother for whom Christ died, an unlit

lamp waiting to be kindled and illuminated by the Holy Spirit. I do not say, I do not think for a moment, that the Christian religion is the only one rich in good works. I know how much England owes to the charity and public spirit of believing Jews. In India the Parsees have always been rich in good works. When I was here as an undergraduate I numbered among my friends Mohammedans full of a noble social enthusiasm. But whatever we may say of other faiths I am sure I can say—for the proofs are before my eyes daily—that the disciples of Him who came “to seek and to save that which was lost”⁹ do, in this matter, follow in the Master’s steps.

Here is a relevant piece of evidence. Who would you say is the best loved man in England to-day? If there were a plebiscite I think only one man would be in the running: George Lansbury. Men may like or men may hate his political views. To know him is to love him; and to members of Parliament in Westminster, and to the poor of Poplar he is always “dear old George.” Well here is something of his history as he himself has told it. When he first became known as a social worker he was a convinced secularist, a man who

⁹ Luke xix, 10.

repudiated Christianity and all supernatural sanctions. And then gradually the first fire of his social enthusiasm seemed to leave him. The rich were so selfish and indifferent; the poor were so unresponsive and so content in their squalor; his fellow-workers were so self-seeking and uninspired; he himself seemed to effect nothing. And then one day the thought came to him, whether he might not find the driving power he needed if he returned to the faith of his boyhood. For a year he thought, and read and at last prayed, and at the year's end he was back as a communicant at Poplar Parish Church where he was confirmed as a boy. And since then he has never lost hope or faith or love, but still lives and works for others. I have told the story in my own words, for it is a quarter of a century and more since I read it in a little booklet called *Labour and Religion*. But I am sure that I have not misrepresented it. And I think the lesson it teaches is a true one. If I may quote once more from my favourite novel *John Inglesant* I would say: "Nothing but the infinite pity is sufficient for the infinite pathos of human life."

So if you are prepared to accept Jesus Christ as Lord of your life, strive to be in the world, as

He was, as they that serve. I am not speaking solely, I am not speaking chiefly, to those who are hoping to be clergy or professional social workers. Indeed I think I am speaking more eagerly to those who are going into business and into the professions. Don't let life be all getting and spending. Find room also for giving. And remember this: In the long run nothing is worth giving but yourself. And how unstinted giving enriches life! Tennyson, in one of his poems, says: "The niggard throats of Manchester may bawl." What has impressed me, during nearly thirty-five years in Lancashire is the way in which many of our leading men work hard at their business but find their relaxation, and the interest of their lives, not in hunting or shooting, not in their golf or their motoring, but in the service they give to public causes, political, philanthropic and religious. And I find their lives enriched and their characters deepened and strengthened by such service. And what I find true in the case of our great merchant princes I find true also in the lives of working men and women. And then I remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."¹⁰

¹⁰ Acts xx, 35.

So I would urge you to be in the world as they that serve. And I am sure that that service is the happiest that brings you most closely into touch with living human beings. To sit on a committee is good. To work directly in a Lad's Club, an Unemployed Centre, or a Church, is better still. Holy Scripture says of the personified Wisdom of God that her delights were with the sons of men,¹¹ and you will find that the best joys of life are connected with those you love and who love you. For given the bare necessities of life, food and clothes and a shelter, there are only two things absolutely necessary for happiness; someone to love and someone to love you. And the best thing to collect is friends. And may I, in this my last address to you, put in a plea for one class of the community in which I am specially interested and which sadly needs your help. I refer to the boys of the poorest class of unskilled labour. In an article which I wrote in a north country daily paper some years ago I expressed my wonder that so few men of the public school and varsity type heard the call to give themselves unreservedly to the service of the poorest boys and young men. Who would not pity them? They leave school at fourteen,

¹¹ Prov. viii, 31.

at the age when, for you and me and people of our class, life is just beginning to open out with all its richness of joys and interests. They go to long hours of dull, back-breaking, ill-paid toil at an age when you and I were beginning to test our powers on the playing fields, or in the gymnasium or the swimming bath. When they have done two years of such work, long enough to forget anything they learned at school, and long enough to lose any interest in knowledge, any stirrings of intellectual curiosity that they may have felt at school, they are sacked because there is a never-ending stream of boys leaving the Day Schools ready to take their places. Then they find no place for them in life. Their homes are not places in which to spend any time. They are at best places to sleep in. They are too ignorant, too ragged, too undisciplined for the Lads' Clubs or the brigades or scout troupes. The dark dirty back streets of our great cities are their playing fields, and the temptations of these streets, gambling, drink, vice and crime dog their steps. And when the time comes when they should marry, and found a home, and know the interests and the joys of life they are, too often, unemployed, standing in the queue at the Labour Exchange or

being cross-examined by the Public Assistance Committee. And yet there are among them young men many as fine, as lovable, as worthy of friendship and of help as any to whom I am speaking. These lads and young men need many things. They need material help, clothes and boots and money. They need education and training and a chance in life. But shall I tell you what they need most? Call me sentimentalist if you like; what they need most is a friend, someone to make them feel that they matter, that they count for something. For it is as true to-day, as when the words were written, that "A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."¹²

So I say to you again, do not let your life be all getting and spending; find some place in it for free unstinted giving. And you will find the greatest happiness if what you give most freely is yourself, and if your delights too are with the sons of men.

¹² Isaiah xxxii, 2.

TWO BOYS

(Reprinted, by permission, from the Manchester Guardian)

SPENDING a fortnight recently in a big seaport town, I employed part of the time attending a series of children's services. Though the conductor attained some wonderful results, the congregations of seven hundred were at first quite untamed. I tried to help by sitting between two of the worst-behaved boys, and after the service told them to wait for me outside. When I asked what school they attended, one said, with a rude guffaw, "I don't go to school. I'm fifteen. I'm out of work, I am." The other, equally rudely added, "I've never worked. We're the unemployed." It was dreadful to hear mere children making a mock of their own misery. Here is the story of the first. On leaving school he worked for six weeks, and then left to look after five younger children while his mother was in hos-

pital. Never able to get another job, he had slowly lost hope, self-respect, manners, and decent habits. Insolent when he thought me an enemy, he tried to defend himself when he saw I wanted to be his friend. "I'm not a bad boy really. They liked me at work, and did not want to lose me. And I've a good character from school." And he produced a dirty sheet of notepaper on which I managed to make out a really excellent character for punctuality, behaviour and ability. The other was a yet worse case. In six months since leaving school he had had nothing but odd Saturday jobs; for his father, a carter doing three days a week, and with only one girl working in a family of six, had never been able, though a life teetotaller, to get him decent clothes. I never saw anything like the filthy rags which seemed rather to expose than hide his yet more filthy body. He too had his defence. "I'm not a lazy boy. I walk miles for a job. And I spent all Saturday mending my boots." And he showed me the lumps of rotting leather which he called boots, on the soles of which he had nailed pieces of wood fit to lame a horse. His veiled references to his mother puzzled me, and I said, "Tell me about her." Then the flood broke. She had died when he was ten, and he,

like many boys in every class, carried a wound that had never healed. His father, a decent but rough and stupid man, trying, as he said to me, to "do his duty by the boy" shouted at him continually. (A boy in camp once explained his enjoyment of the week by saying to me, "Well, you're not shouted at all day"). But he had a worse trouble. His eldest brother had "done something" and been sent to a home, and emigrated, so that no one now knows where he is. "When mother died she told father not to marry again, but to keep us all together. Father does not want me to go, but he says I've had my chance, and the next time I shall be sent away." Anyone who knows how nervous and easily wounded many boys are, even public-school boys, who have never known anything but love, will understand how the thought of being sent alone into a hostile world rode the boy's mind like a nightmare. Both lads had already crossed the borders of crime. One was on probation for a petty theft ("I've never got anything by it. Another boy got the threepence, and I got caught"), and each had had a policeman to his house that morning about some damage done for which they had to pay sixpence each. "But I have not got sixpence. I

never have any pennies. I've not been to the pictures for months. I never do have anything, nor anywhere to go."

What could I do? Luckily there is, in every town and village, one ever ready help in time of trouble. Next morning, marching both boys to the police station, I asked to see the inspector. That pleasant-faced man spent some time expounding the official regulations which rendered what I wanted impossible.* But we both knew he would do it in the end, and at last he said, "Well, well, we'll see what can be done" and called a tall sergeant. To him I unfolded my programme, which ran: A good meal (one boy had been out all night, and neither had had any breakfast), a hot tub at the public baths, a hair-cut, and a complete rig-out of clothes. Fortunately, the sergeant, at the moment when called, had been writing out the report of the boys. So he readily consented. That evening he came to my house with two decent-looking lads in whom it was difficult to recognise the wretched ragamuffins of the morning. I said "Sergeant, this is clearly the end of a

* The police who may spend money on children still at school, have no funds for those above school age. But funds need never be a difficulty. Where a case is good money will be forthcoming from somewhere.

perfect day, and these boys must look back on it with pleasure. So I shall stand them the price of a visit to the pictures, and some fish and chips afterwards." He caught on to the idea and kindly insisted on standing the price for one of the two. I had been trying to get the boys a job, but he said he was well-known in the district and could probably do it. So they will, at any rate, have a chance.

But my title remains, unhappily, true. Two boys! Two out of thousands. Who would not pity the unskilled, out-of-work boy of the poorest class? What one of the boys said of himself is true of them all. They never have any pennies unless they pilfer them. They never do have anything, nor anywhere to go. They are too dirty and ragged for the boys' clubs or brigades. They are shouted at at home; and if, in the street, the high spirits which I and my companions at their age let off on the playing-fields, or in the gymnasium or the swimming bath, lead them to break some half-understood social law, the community punishes them with a heavy hand, which is none the less cruel because it is impersonal and, I suppose, inevitable. If they get a job it is of dull and mechanical labour, and they strain their undeve-

loped, ill-nourished bodies lifting weights too great for them or dragging heavy hand-carts. Two things always puzzle me. Why is there any church in a poor district without its Band of Hope and Ragged School? And, even more strange, why do not more public-school men give themselves to the service of the poorest city lads? For I think we make too much fuss of Herod. After all, he murdered quite a few babies, in one small village, and did it, we may suppose, with merciful swiftness. But we, in every city and big town, massacre the bodies, minds, and souls of these innocents by thousands, with who knows what circumstances of long-drawn-out misery and despair?

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